MARVEL REMEMBERS

JOHN ROMITA

MARVEL 4

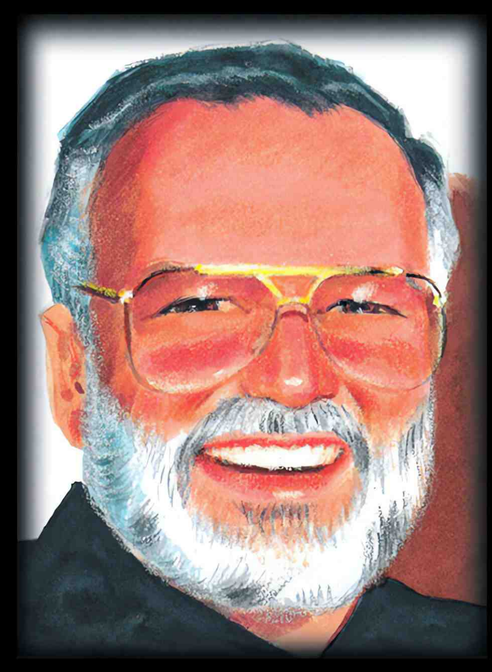
DAREDEVIL & ECHO

TABOO
B. EARL
PHIL NOTO

noto

John Romita

1930 – 2023



Marvel mourns the passing of comic-book artist John Romita Sr., whose work on *Amazing Spider-Man* helped make the character a worldwide sensation. In his work as Marvel's art director, he designed the Punisher and Wolverine and served as mentor for countless artists during his decades-long tenure with the company.

Romita had a profound effect on everyone he met at Marvel. He was always kind and warm and served as an inspiration to all who knew him or followed his work. Romita helped build the Marvel Universe as we know it, and he will be greatly missed.

"John Romita Sr. was an incomparable artist who brought so many iconic Marvel characters to life on the page and set the tone and look of Marvel's comics for decades. His version of Spider-Man has inspired so many of us at Marvel Studios. Our thoughts are with his family and the generations of artists and fans who fell in love with the characters he drew."

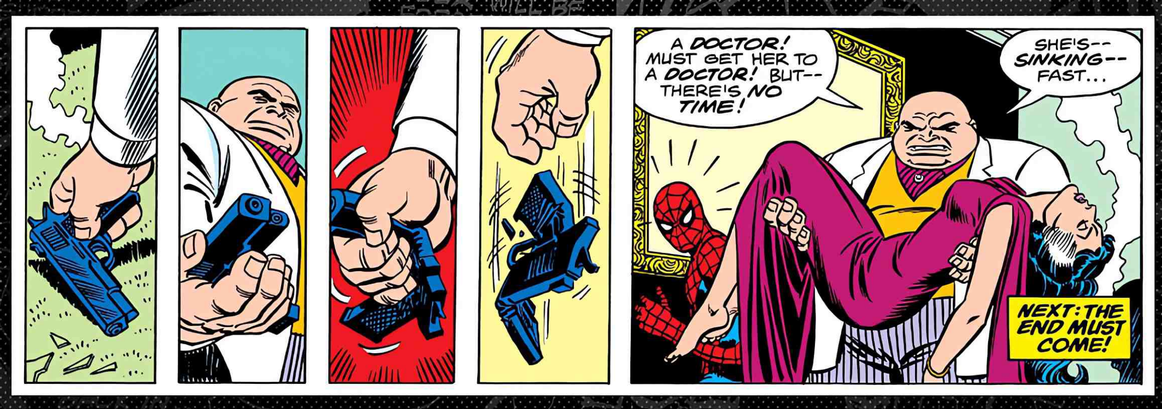
— KEVIN FEIGE

"I was recently able to fawn over some of John Romita Sr.'s original Spider-Man pages, and the word that kept popping into my mind as I marveled over his linework was 'timeless.' His style was such a departure from what had come before, which John did say made him nervous, but one that came to define the look of Peter, Spider-Man, MJ, Gwen and everyone else in their orbit. And the same was true for every Marvel character John designed, penciled and inked. Whether as an artist or art director, John's work influenced generations of comic book artists. With his passing, the comic industry loses a true legend, but just like his artwork, his legacy will remain timeless."

— C.B. CEBULSKI

"When you close your eyes and picture Spider-Man, you're probably picturing a John Romita Sr. Spider-Man. From his debut of the character in *Amazing Spider-Man #39*, the subsequent fifty issues of art, more than a hundred covers and the work he did on the newspaper strip, John defined Spidey for generations of people around the world. That would be enough for anyone else, but John was also an excellent art director, a fantastic father, a doting grandfather and a gentleman. All of us making Spider-Man comics, and Marvel Comics in general, work in his shadow and strive to live up to the example of the legend, Jazzy John Romita."

— NICK LOWE



DECADES OF AMAZING WORK

John Romita wore many hats at Marvel. His most famous contribution was his run on *Amazing Spider-Man*, including the above cover to the series' landmark fiftieth issue. His association with the character would include drawing the cover of the famed wedding of Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson, *Amazing Spider-Man Annual #21*, seen opposite top right. With Stan Lee, he started the Spider-Man newspaper strip, including the sequence with Kingpin from Sept. 25, 1977, seen opposite center. Behind the scenes, Romita was responsible for designing many of Marvel's most famous characters. At bottom opposite are Romita's costume designs for Black Widow and Wolverine.

"One of the highlights of my career was working with John Romita Sr. I couldn't believe that my 25-year-old self was working and interacting with him, and what made it even better was that he was so considerate and kind – something that has stuck with me ever since, among many other memories with him. It was one of the rare moments where you meet one of your heroes and he exceeds your expectations in every possible way.

His contributions to Marvel's pantheon and culture are immense, and he will be sorely missed. He was a great and kind man who truly made the world a better place. My deepest condolences to Virginia, Johnny and the Romita family."

— DAN BUCKLEY

As a child, **Matt Murdock** lost his sight due to an accident involving radioactive chemicals. But that same accident caused his other senses to become heightened, and now Matt uses his extraordinary abilities to fight for justice as the vigilante **Daredevil**!

Born deaf, **Maya Lopez**, A.K.A. **Echo**, was raised by the criminal **Kingpin** after he murdered her father. Maya eventually rejected the Kingpin and became a super hero thanks to the photographic reflexes that allow her to duplicate any action that she has witnessed and make her an unparalleled hand-to-hand combatant.

Together, they are...

DAREDEVIL & ECHO

In 1835 Hell's Kitchen, reformed gang leader Tommy Murdock was held captive below his church. The parish priest attempted to kill Tommy in order to open a mystical gateway to free a being called the Blind One. With the help of a mysterious woman named Creeping Death, Tommy willingly sacrificed himself to allow her to enter the portal and battle the Blind One.

In present day Hell's Kitchen, at the very same church, Daredevil, Echo and Ghost Rider faced off against Demagoblin, who also seeks to free the Blind One. In the middle of their clash, Creeping Death appeared, informing Daredevil that he must follow in the footsteps of his ancestor to defeat the Blind One. Seeing no other way forward, Daredevil allowed Echo to stab him in the heart!

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WELCOME, MATTHEW, TO MY MEADOW.

TO MY RIGHT SITS ***TOMMY MURDOCK,*** YOUR RELATIVE WHO SHARES A SOUL WITH YOU.

AND BETWEEN US ARE THE ***SEVEN CUPS,*** EACH HOLDING A UNIQUE PATH CONNECTED TO YOUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

BY MAKING A WILLING SACRIFICE, I MUST GIVE YOU THE CHOICE OF THESE CUPS. SIX LEAD TO A PATH OF A PARTICULAR BLISS.

BUT ONE CUP IS DIFFERENT THAN THE OTHERS. THIS CUP IS COVERED AND EITHER LEADS TO YOUR ULTIMATE JOY...OR YOUR DEEPEST SUFFERING.

BUT YOU WILL NOT KNOW UNTIL YOU DRINK FROM IT.

THE ONLY WAY FORWARD IS TO MAKE A ***CHOICE.***

I see everything the Blind One describes--and what a glorious sight it is.

All so peaceful... and I don't want it to change.

IS THIS HEAVEN? OR PURGATORY?

BECAUSE THERE IS NO WAY WE ARE IN HELL.

I WOULDN' KNOW. I AM A SHELL WITH NO SOUL. A LAMP WITH NO WICK.

THEN HOW IS THE SPIRIT IN ME THE SAME AS YOURS?

MY SON GAVE BIRTH TO A SON WHO GAVE LIFE TO ANOTHER WHO THEN BROUGHT FORTH A BOY WHO GAVE A HEARTBEAT TO YOU.

EACH SPIRIT IS A WHOLE, MUCH LIKE WHEN A MAGNET SPLITS, IT RETAINS BOTH POLES.

FORTUNATELY, TOMMY HAD AN OFFSPRING WHICH LED TO YOU. BUT WHEN HE DIED WITHOUT BEING SACRIFICED, HE TRAPPED US HERE UNTIL SOMEONE WITH THE SAME SOUL COULD SET US FREE.

YOUR CHOICE IS AT HAND, AND A POEM IS YOUR GUIDE.

By the way of the Blade,
Laid you to Rest.
I pulled the Gate through you,
Naught slain, but blessed.
Dragged body home,
Freed soul from its cage.
And embracing your Sacrifice
I'll give you your Stage.
THis moment of Truth is yours, don't you see?
Here down in Heaven where the Meat Puppets are free!

I can see the words for the first time in my life. But it's as if they're still in my mind's eye.

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT EACH BEGINNING LEADS TO A NEW ENDING.

The beginning is the first letter leading to the final ending.

I understand that the only way forward is staring me right in the face.

BLIND FAITH

THE CHOICE OF *BLIND FAITH.*

IT'S HOW I'VE LIVED MY ENTIRE LIFE.

GULLLP

I AM BLIND SO THAT I MAY SEE THE *TRUTH.*

NOOOO!

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO CHOOSE *YOURSELF* AND GIVE *ME* YOUR SOUL!

AY?! WHA'?! WHERE AM I...?

THAT IS WHAT YOU HUMANS *ALWAYS* DO...YOU CHOOSE YOUR OWN SELFISHNESS NO MATTER THE COST!

IT IS NO MATTER.
I WILL TEAR YOUR SOUL RIGHT OUT OF YOUR FRAGILE MEAT MACHINE AND SLURP IT WITH GREAT PLEASURE.
I WILL TAKE BACK WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY MINE!

BELOW HELL'S KITCHEN.
NOW.
SINNERS! YOU ONLY PROLONG THE INEVITABLE.
GHOST RIDER! ECHO! YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR MY FOUR CHILDREN OF THE APOCALYPSE...
MMMMMWWWWOOOOOOOMMMMAAAHHHHHH
...OR THE DEMAGOBLIN!
THOOOSSHHH
ARRRGGGHH!
YOU MAY HAVE FOUND NEW STRENGTH WITH YOUR FALSE GOD, DEMAGOBLIN.
BUT MY VENGEANCE WILL ALWAYS CUT DOWN ANY WHO WISH TO HARM THE INNOCENT.
THE CHILDREN WILL SEE THE TRUTH ONCE THEY BREAK FREE FROM YOUR SPELL.
MMMMMWWWWOOOOOOOMMMMAAAHHHHHH

AHHHH!

I WILL JUST HAVE TO SACRIFICE YOU, DEAR GIRL.

THE BLIND ONE *MUST* BE BROUGHT BACK TO SAVE THIS SICK AND TWISTED WORLD... AND I WILL BE ITS ARCHITECT!

MMMWWW

OOOOOOM

MMAAHHHH

YOU WILL DO NO SUCH THING, DEMON. I WILL DRAG YOU DOWN TO HELL AFTER WE FREE THESE INNOCENT SOULS!

MMMMWWWOOO

...EEEEYAAAAHHHH!

FOOL! YOU WILL ONLY SUCCEED IN DESTROYING THEIR FLESHY FORMS, FOR IT IS I WHO HOLD THEIR ESSENCES AND CONTROL THEIR DESTINIES.

OOOOF!

ECHO CANNOT *HEAR* MY FLESHLESS LIPS...SO I MUST *SPELL* IT IN HELLFIRE!

SHE'S CAPTURED THEIR SOULS

GOT IT.

YOUR FLAMES DO NOT PHASE ME, RIDER. I'VE COME WITH *PURPOSE* THAT IS *GREATER* THAN *VENGEANCE!*

THE JAR!

MMW WWI IWO OOOO

A STONE'S THROW...

...WILL *SHATTER* HER GLASS HOUSE!

IT IS TIME FOR EVOLUTION. A *NEW* CREATION STORY MUST BE CRAFTED, AND I WILL BE THE *PEN* IN OUR MASTER'S HAND!

NOOOO!

SMASH

MMMMMMMMMMM

MMMMWW

--OOOMMMPPP!

WWW--

WHAAAA...?

WHERE ARE WE?

YOU!

YOU LIED TO US!

NO! I GAVE YOU *POWER!* FREEDOM FROM THIS WORLD...A WORLD THAT DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOU AND HAS LEFT YOU BEHIND.

RUMBLE

THE DAGGER

THIS IS *NOT* HOW IT WILL END.

MMWWWWOOOOMMMMAHHHHH

WE'LL HOLD HER!

MY CHILDREN, I CAN PROMISE YOU MORE THAN THESE HEATHENS EVER COULD.

GRAB THE DAGGER!

WITH THE BLIND ONE AT OUR SIDE, WE WILL TAKE NOT ONLY THIS WORLD, BUT *ALL* OF CREATION

I'M BACK, BOYO.

NOW'S TIME FA'R DA MURDOCKS TO GIVE DIS BLIND ONE WAT'FER!

LET'S DO THIS, GRAMPS!

WHO YA CALLIN' GRAMPS, KID?

DIS OL' BODY'S SLINGIN' MORE PUNCH THAN A SLEDGEHAMMER!

YOU CANNOT FATHOM THE POWER YOU ARE FACING!

WATCH OUT!

AAHHHHHH!

TTSSHHHH

Old-fashioned fisticuffs isn't the way forward.

I see something inside the Blind One...a Golden Egg that pulses with power. It gives me an idea.

KEEP IT BUSY!

I DON' THINK THAT'LL BE A PROBLEM, BOYO!

BUT IT'S *YOU* IT WANTS.

HRRRNNNN. YER SOUL IS DA ACTIVE ONE IT NEEDS!

TSHHH

TSHHH

I can hear the egg pulsing.

I can smell the acid burning.

I WILL ABSORB YOU FIRST, TOMMY MURDOCK. BUT IT IS MATTHEW'S SOUL I CRAVE...THE ONE THAT WILL GIVE ME THE POWER OF CREATION!

AHHHHHHH! HURRY!

TSHHH

AAAYYYYHHHHH!

NOOOOOO!

GOT IT!

SHK

NOW TO DRAG YOU BACK TO WHERE YOU BELONG, DEMON!

THIS IS NOT THE WAY, MY CHILDREN!

HEEEEECHAAAAA!

THUNK

HNGH!

YOU WILL REGRET THIS, MATTHEW.

YOUR SOUL WOULD HAVE GIVEN LIFE TO A WHOLE NEW EXISTENCE.

I DID GOOD, BOYO?

YOU DID GOOD, GRAMPS.

DON' CALL ME GRAMPS, KID.

I sense that the sweat lodge still stands in the distance.

The egg pulses in my hand as I walk toward the building.

With every step, it becomes louder.

A thrum, vibrating so greatly I can "see" its infinite frequencies reaching out into the universe.

My senses overload as I enter this esoteric experience.

THESE TWO HAVE BEEN SEPARATED SINCE BIRTH, NEVER KNOWING PEACE.

NOW WE CAN FIND BALANCE AS EXISTENCE BREATHES. A BODY WITHOUT A HEART HAS NO EMOTION, JUST AS A MIND WITH NO PASSION HAS ONLY LOGIC.

YOUR SOUL IS ONE OF THE GUIDES TO THIS EXISTENCE, MATTHEW. YOU EMBODY THE BALANCE OF BOTH THE DEVIL AND THE ANGEL.

THE EGG IS PLANTED BACK INSIDE THE WOMB. WE HAVE BEEN IN AN EXHALE FOR THE PAST 13.7 BILLION YEARS.

NOW THE INHALE MAY BEGIN AGAIN...

"...AS YOU ARE REBORN THROUGH THE EAST."

RED! YOU'RE ALIVE!

-KAFF-...-KAFF-... HCCCKKKPPPTTT. MORE ALIVE THAN EVER.

SKKKREEEEEEEEECCKKKKKKKK!

YOU WILL *NOT* TAKE ME BACK, RIDER!

MY PLACE IS HERE WITH MY CHILDREN!

YOUR PLACE IS IN ETERNAL DAMNATION, DEMON.

YOUR HELL CHAINS HAVE NO HOLD ON THE DEMAGOBLIN, FOOL.

MAYBE NOT...

...BUT YOU'VE NEVER FACED THE TRIO OF ***SEE*** NO EVIL, ***HEAR*** NO EVIL AND ***SPEAK*** NO EVIL!

HEEECHAAA!

VROOOOOMMM

NOOOO!

WE GOT A PLAN HERE?

DON'T WORRY. WE AREN'T BAD KIDS...JUST MISUNDERSTOOD.

AND WE STILL HAVE OUR POWERS.

MMMMWWWOOOMMMAHHHH

RUMBLE

WHOOSHH

KRACKKK

HURRY, KIDS! WE'RE ALMOST OUT!

KRAAK--

--BOOM

WHHHEEEE--

--WHHOOOOO

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Demons, ancient gods and apocalyptic kids.

After that, all I can think about is a nice quiet night with Elektra.

POLICE

Enjoying the stars with a cup of peppermint tea.

But after my time in what I'm calling the afterlife, I don't see the stars or the universe in quite the same way.

"SO, YOU'RE SAYING THAT THERE'S A GOLDEN HEART OUT THERE IN THE GREAT BEYOND?"

MORE LIKE HEART-BRAIN. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DESCRIBE IT.

AND MY ANCESTOR? YOU MET HER THERE AGAIN?

YES. SHE HELPED ME GET HOME.

AND SHOWED ME THAT JUST BENEATH THE SURFACE IS ANOTHER LAYER OF MEANING.

"ONE CONNECTED DIRECTLY TO CREATION...AND THE BREATH OF THE UNIVERSE."

WHAT BRINGS MYTHS ONE STEP CLOSER TO REALITY? ANYONE?

YOU MISSED SCHOOL, LOSER. WERE YOU CRYING AT HOME WITH MOMMY?

YES, LEOR?

MOST MYTHS COME FROM SOME SORT OF TRUTH.

SOMETIMES IT'S EXAGGERATED...

...BUT OTHER TIMES, THE *TRUTH* IS EVEN *SCARIER* THAN THE STORY.

THE END.

Daredevil's adventures continue in...

DAREDEVIL #1!

Email us at MHEROES@MARVEL.COM and mark your messages "okay to print" for a chance to see them answered in future issues!